

Luke 11: Fr Stephen De Young

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The Lord's Prayer

- Jesus is praying
- The Lord's Prayer is roughly the same in St Matthew and St Luke's gospels, but it's framed differently
- Teach us to pray
 - Prayer in those days was not as casual as it is for us... for us we can go pray and just say extemporaneous prayers and just shut our door and speak to God
 - In the pagan societies, prayer usually meant reciting incantations and doing magic and calling on these demon gods to try and get what you want. If someone wanted a good yield in his crops, he would find the "god of crops" and offer sacrifices and prayers to it hoping that his crops give a good yield
 - In the Jewish societies, they had some set prayers and set sacrifices outlined in the law... but many times we see in the Old Testament that the Lord rejects them because they are coming and saying these prayers, thinking they are justified - despite being completely wicked
 - In the first century, leaders of Jews would tell them when to pray and what to say and when to say what - St John the Forerunner did this (Luke 11:1) and there are other indications of teachers who did this... usually it would be certain psalms and certain times in the day
 - This carried into Christianity as we see in our Agpeyas
 - The disciples are asking for the structure - if prayer isn't about magically getting God to do what you want, then what is it and how do we do it?
- Prayer isn't about changing God, it's about changing us
 - Draw close to God in prayer and the prayers change us
 - Prayers of repentance are for us to change, not for God to be happy instead of sad. We seek healing & cleansing
 - Prayers of thanksgiving are for us to give us a grateful heart and fight our tendency to greed, selfishness and pride
 - Sometimes we pray for someone sick to get better and he doesn't get better so we say "Prayer doesn't work" - but that is because we are assuming the purpose of prayer is to get God to heal this person... magic!
 - There is a prayer in 2 Chronicles called "The Prayer of Jabez" - a few years ago, some protestants started to advertise it as "If you say this prayer five times a day then God will give you money" or "then God will bless you" - that's magic! That's paganism! That's not Christianity! That's not what prayer is! It suggests that God

ought to do what man wants instead of man seeking God's will

- Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name
 - The Lord is introducing the concept of "Father" to describe God - and it's not our earthly father (our dad) but our Heavenly Father
 - This is the opposite of what the Gentiles and Pagans would think... no one wanted to be Zeus' friend or have Zeus as father... they wanted to appease the gods to stay away from them and leave them alone
 - St Paul will talk a lot about "adoption" and how we have been adopted as "sons of God" as explaining HOW God is our Father and HOW we became His sons
 - When we pray, we are developing a relationship with Him - it's not just asking Him to do things or asking Him not to smite us... it's akin to a healthy relationship of children with their father
 - Even though He's our Father, it doesn't mean we'll be informal with Him like "our dad" but He is Holy and He is God who created the universe and the angels and us
- Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven
 - Your kingdom come - in those days people thought that meant the Messiah would overthrow the Roman and restore the kingdom to Israel
 - "Your kingdom come" really means "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"
 - They thought "Your kingdom come" meant "come into existence because it doesn't exist now" - but Christ says "come to earth as it is in heaven"
 - God is already ruling over His Creation... in heaven; in the unseen place. We are praying that that kingdom will come to exist on earth in the same way... where God's will is done throughout the world.
- Give us day by day our daily bread
 - We're asking God to care for our needs
 - St Luke will continue to expand on this
 - Worrying about what we have and what we need
 - God knows what you need before you ask... Is it that if you don't ask, God won't provide your daily meals? So why ask?
 - Prayer is for US
 - If I am praying for God to give me food and clothing and my daily needs... then I'm not going to be worrying about them myself
 - And if God gives me all of the things I need... I'm not going to take credit for them myself
 - It is to change ourselves to know that the things I have come from God and the things I need tomorrow will come from God
- Forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us
 - St Matthew talks about "trespasses" whereas St Luke talks about "debts"
 - St Luke tends to take things about wealth more literally
 - "Blessed are the poor" in St Luke; "Blessed are the poor in spirit" in St Matthew
 - We are asking God for forgiveness of our sins and trespasses against Him, but if we do that we only have the right to ask for as much forgiveness as we are showing to others...
 - If the only forgiveness I'm going to get from God is the amount I give to other people... I might be in trouble

- By asking in this way, I'm not trying to get God to do something "to forgive me" but it's for me to learn how to forgive others
- It calls us to step back and begin by forgiving others... then I can ask God for forgiveness
- It also points out that all sin has two dimensions
 - Any sin you commit doesn't affect just you... it affects the people around you, the people you sin against, the people who know that you've done it and what example you set, disappointment, loss of trust, etc.
- If there's a problem between me and someone else, that relationship must be mended first before I can ask forgiveness from God... sometimes we say "well I confessed... God forgave me so you should forgive me"
- Forgiveness is not "getting off the hook" - we have hurt, harmed, corrupted ourselves and other people... that has to be remedied both in us and in other people
- Zacchaeus - "Salvation has come to his house" wasn't as soon as Jesus entered, but as soon as Zacchaeus made things right for what he's done (by returning four fold and half of his goods)
- And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
 - God tempts no one (James 1:13)
 - God is not tempting someone to sin
 - Temptation can be trial, test, etc.
 - We know that God is in control of the future and knows what will happen
 - If tomorrow I'm tried or tested or tempted, I'm probably going to give in to them (if I'm being honest about my own weakness and sinfulness).
 - We aren't asking God to take away the temptation, but we are confessing our own weakness. And if I manage to avoid those sins tomorrow it's not because of me, but it's because God protected me.

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Friend at Midnight

- Even if this guy isn't a great friend, even if this guy has done this before - you'd give it to him just to get rid of him!
- Jesus is talking about prayer
- Some say this story means that "God will give you whatever you ask for!" No!
- The context of the story is persistence in prayer
 - Even if someone doesn't really care about you, if you're persistent, he will give you what you're looking for
 - If that's true, then how much more will God - who loves and cares for you - give you?
- Persistence in Prayer is important - God is almost saying that you won't get what you want the first time, but must be persistent
- It's not about saying the right words or saying them the right amount of times to get God to do it for you

- In the process of prayer, sometimes we realize that the thing we thought we needed... isn't what's needed
- Or we realize that we can get along fine without it
- Sometimes we just need time to grow through prayer
- It's not that God will eventually give you what you want, but that God will give you what you need and the process and persistence in prayer will open your eyes to what it is you actually need and that God has been providing it for you the whole time
- "If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts..."
 - He's talking to the disciples... why call them evil?
 - These are the disciples who argued about who was greater
 - These are the disciples who wanted fire from heaven on the Samaritan village
 - These are the disciples who saw someone casting out demons in His name and told them to stop
 - Lest the disciples adopt the attitude of the Pharisees - that they are better or more good or more special than anyone else, He reminds them that they are sinners too
 - In reality, we are all sinners and we are all evil and it is a message for all of us
- "How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"
 - Not "how much more will He give good gifts" but "give the Holy Spirit"
 - The Fruit of the Spirit is what God will give us:
 - Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control

A House Divided Cannot Stand

- Three groups are present here...
- The first group accuses Him of casting out Satan by Beelzebub
 - The chief idol in the Old Testament was Baal and another name for him was Baalzebub (2 Kings 1:2-3)
 - They believed that the pagan gods were real, but they were demons... they are not to be called gods or made equal to God.
- The second group sought a sign
 - They recognized that there was something different about this Man... maybe he's a prophet or something
 - They are unsure and on the fence
 - "And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord *is* God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word." (1 Kings 18:21)
- The third group is the disciples
- The Lord addresses the first group first
 - Their logic is faulty... if He's part of Satan's kingdom, then He's not going to cast out demons He's going to send them out to possess... So that doesn't make sense
 - At the same time, it is only God who can cast out demons... people who performed exorcisms before always did it in the name of God, or prayed that God would cast out the demon. Christ didn't need to do either of those.
 - So He must be God

- "If I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you"
 - No one can take a strong man's stuff unless he's stronger than him!
 - Satan is the strong man and his palace and his goods are the world
 - The stronger man is the Lord Jesus who overcomes him and takes from him all that he has
 - This is referring to the casting out of the demon... Satan has taken possession of this man and no one can take him back except He who is stronger than Satan... which is God
- Then he starts to address the second group
 - He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters
 - The second group is not with Him, they're on the fence... but if they're on the fence, they are not with Him. And if they're not with Him, then they're against Him.
 - There is no lukewarm
 - As Christians, you're either in or out.
 - Some people try to call themselves Christians without doing the works of Christians
 - Some want to be religious but not Spiritual
 - It's like Elijah said... if the Lord is God, follow Him! And if not, then go watch football.
 - But if the Lord really is God, and He rose from the dead and He's the Way the Truth and the Life, then we have work to do. We have to examine our hearts. We have to be transformed. We have to change and live a life of repentance. We have to be serious and intentional about our eternal life.
 - Nothing is served by simply going to church or calling yourself Christian or any of the other things... if we aren't serious about it
- An unclean spirit returns
 - You can't stay neutral... if you stay neutral, the devil will return with seven other demons and take possession
- Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!
 - Continuing the thought from before... it's not enough to hear the word of God, but we must keep it.
- Seeking a Sign
 - Jonah went to Nineveh (modern day Mosul where ISIS is... Capital of the Assyrian Empire which is one of the most bloody Empires in the history of the world... made the Nazis look like toddlers) and said to them "in three days God will destroy this city"... that's it.
 - Conversely, the Lord came preaching repentance and doing miracles
 - The queen of the South - which is everything from Ethiopia to Saudi Arabia and Yemen came all the way to Solomon in Israel to hear him speak and after that praised the Lord God (1 Kings 10)
 - They didn't even have to go to the Lord, He came to them
 - If the Lord is comparing Himself to Jonah, then who are the Israelites? The people of Nineveh

- If the Lord is comparing Himself to Solomon, then who are the Israelites? The Gentile Queen of the South
- This Gentile queen will rise up and judge and condemn the Israelites
- These Ninevites will rise up and judge and condemn the Israelites
- Because the big difference between Israel and Nineveh? Nineveh repented.
- And indeed, a greater than Jonah and Solomon is here.
- Who is greater than the Prophet of God, and the King Anointed by God? God Himself
- The Lamp of the Body
 - Your sense bring things in... what you look at, what you listen to... it is brought into your body
 - If you are looking at light, it will bring light into your body
 - If you are looking at darkness, it will bring darkness into your body
 - Hear the word of God and do it...
 - You don't light a lamp and put it in the closet
 - You light the lamp and give it a place to illuminate
 - The Lord is giving them the light when He speaks to them

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers

- The Inside and Outside of the Cup
 - You're so worried about how things look... washing your hands. But if you took a bowl, washed the outside of it and left it dirty on the inside and put your food in it to eat... you're eating filth!
 - You're so concerned about being outwardly clean, but you're not worried about what's going on in your heart and soul (because you think no one knows)
 - Do you think God cares about the outside and doesn't care about the inside?
 - The Laws in the Old Testament were a means to the end... God wanted to make a point about being clean on the inside by giving them laws for cleanliness
 - In Hosea, the people were offering the sacrifices and God told them to stop! He said "I desire mercy and not sacrifice"
 - The ritual had purpose and meaning and they weren't paying attention to it
 - St Paul discusses this with regards to the Eucharist... if you're showing up to eat and you don't know what you're eating or what you're doing, then don't do it! Some of you have even died. By doing it without discerning it, you are worse off than if you hadn't done it.
 - If you're full of greed and lust, then it doesn't matter how many times you wash your hands
- Woe
 - Cursed
 - Opposite of Blessing
- Tithing of Mint and Rue and Herbs
 - Herbs are the smallest thing... it's very picky. It's not 10% of your income but it's like the smallest thing. You're so picky about these small rules, but you're not worried about justice and love of God. Which is more important?
 - You should tithe! But you also need to be just and love God
- Best Seats and Greetings

- They always wanna be right up front... not so you can hear better, but so everyone sees you
 - You love when people come and greet you in the marketplace as a holy man
 - Graves Unseen
 - You are dead inside and no one realizes it
 - Jesus was just invited to this Pharisee's house and the Pharisee hasn't said anything (just thoughts)! And Jesus is tearing him up
 - Lawyer says "hey I'm technically a Pharisee too!"
 - Jesus doesn't say "oh my bad..."
 - You load men with burdens
 - You come to people and tell them all the rules of the law... can't do this, can't do that... but do you try to help them? To help them live Godly lives?
 - You build the tombs of the prophets
 - In this time they were building big tombs for the prophets that had already died
 - Building the tombs doesn't show that you're pious, it shows that you're just like them
 - From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah (some say from A-Z)
 - Who is Zechariah?
 - Some Fathers say it's the father of John the Baptist and he was killed between the altar and the high place (holy of holies) at the time of Herod's massacre
 - Taken away the key of knowledge
 - They spend all their lives studying the Law and don't understand it and not only that, but from the way they teach it they make sure no one else understands it either
 - Like someone who has a key and throws it away. So neither he nor the people can enter the door
 - Christ was harsh with them because He was speaking the truth and rebuking them. Some people when we say or do something harsh, for the sake of the truth, they say "why can't you be like Jesus He was so gentle and so quiet and..."
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